

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 AGRE-00
/090 W

-----015037 310255Z /15

R 300608Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 168
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 13000

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ECON, PINT, UG
SUBJECT: CONTINUED DETERIORATION IN UGANDA SITUATION

1. AMBASSADOR VAN SCHAIK OF THE NETHERLANDS INVITED ME
AND SEVERAL OTHER AMBASSADORS FROM THE WEO GROUP FOR LUNCH
ON AUGUST 25 TO REPORT ON HIS RECENT TEN DAY VISIT TO
UGANDA. VAN SCHAIK'S REPORT REVEALED NO BASIC CHANGE IN
THE STEADILY WORSENING TRAGEDY THAT WE HAVE OBSERVED IN
UGANDA DURING RECENT MONTHS, EXCEPT PERHAPS THE BEGINNING
OF AN ATTITUDE OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE AMONG A DESPAIRING
PEOPLE.

2. SECURITY CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM. LESS SO, HOWEVER,
AS A RESULT OF OFFICIAL ACTION THAN AS A CONSEQUENCE OF
THE BASIC ATMOSPHERE OF ANARCHY AND HOLLIGANISM IN THE COUNTRY.
SECURITY IS A FAR GREATER PROBLEM IN THE JINGA
AREA THAN IN AND AROUND KAMPALA. BISHOP WILLIFERS OF
THE DIOCESE OF JINGA, THE SOLE EUROPEAN CATHOLIC
BISHOP REMAINING IN UGANDA, WAS ROUGHED UP TOGETHER WITH
THE DIOCESE'S VICAR AT THE BISHOP'S RESIDENCE ON TUESDAY,
AUGUST 8. BISHOP WILLIFERS CONFIRMED TO AMBASSADOR
VAN SCHAIK THAT THE FOUR MEN WHO FORCIBLY ENTERED HIS
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RESIDENCE WERE ROBBERS PRETENDING TO BE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.
AFTER TWO HOURS OF HARASSMENT THEY LEFT, TAKING A COUPLE
OF RADIOS, SOME SMALL APPLIANCES, ETC. BISHOP WILLIFERS
WAS ONCE BEFORE ACCUSED AND THREATENED FOR QUOTE SPREADING
FALSE INFORMATION UNQUOTE AND HE HAS ASKED THAT THIS INCIDENT
NOT BE PUBLICLY DIVULGED FOR FEAR OF REPRISALS.

3. THE SITUATION IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR IS BECOMING PARTICULARLY DISTRESSING. THE PRINCIPAL CAUSE IS THE CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF THE MOST COMMON DRUGS AND MEDICINE. REGIONAL HOSPITALS AND RURAL HEALTH CENTERS ARE REPORTED TO BE VIRTUALLY WITHOUT ANY DRUG SUPPLIES. THE BLACK MARKET IN DRUGS IS SUCH THAT THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THREE MILLION DOLLAR DRUG SHIPMENT DONATED BY LYBIA HAS ALL BUT DISAPPERED.

4. COMMERCIAL AGREEMENTS FOR IMPORTS ARE BEING HANDLED NOW SOLELY ON A BARTER BASIS. SOME RECENTLY AGREED UPON COMMERCIAL DEALS INCLUDE, A DM 10 MILLION PURCHASE OF VEHICLES FROM MERCEDES BENZ, THE PURCHASE OF TWO FOKKER FRIENDSHIPS WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT, AND THE LETTING OF A CONTRACT WITH A DUTCH FIRM FOR AN ELECTRIFYING PROJECT.

5. THE PRINCIPAL ROUTE OF EXPORT OF UGANDA'S COFFEE CONTINUES TO BE BY AIR CARGO THROUGH DJIBOUTI. SHIPMENT OF COFFEE BY RAIL TO MOMBASA IS RESTRICTED BY KENYAN AUTHORITIES TO TWO CAR LOADS TWICE WEEKLY. KENYA HAS DEMANDED PAYMENT OF 30 MILLION SHILLINGS FROM UGANDA FOR REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE OF THE RAIL LINE TO MOMBASA BEFORE REMOVAL OF THE CURRENT RESTRICTION. ROUGHLY ONE HALF OF LAST YEAR'S COFFEE CROP IS STILL UNSOLD IN UGANDAN WEARHOUSES. THE GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, EXPECTS
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AN IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENT IN THIS SITUATION BY THE END OF SEPTEMBER.

6. THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN EXPERTS BEING BROUGHT INTO THE COUNTRY IS STEADILY RISING. THIS DEVELOPMENT IS A SOURCE OF GROWING RESENTMENT BY THE UGANDAN POPULATION. THE PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC ADVISER TO PRESIDENT AMIN IS THE FORMER WORLD BANK ECONOMIST AHMED RIAZUDDIN. HE HAS BROUGHT IN AN ADDITIONAL 250 PAKISTANI TECHNICAL ADVISERS. SOME 600 BANGLADESHIS AND AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF EGYPTIANS ARE NOW WORKING IN ADVISORY CAPACITIES. VAN SCHAIK CONFIRMED THAT THERE ARE NO CUBAN ADVISERS IN UGANDA. ITALIAN TECHNICIANS HAVE JUST COMPLETED THE REHABILITATION OF A SUGAR REFINERY.

7. COMMENT: FROM THE COMMENTS MADE BY AMBASSADOR VAN SCHAIK AND INFORMATION I HAVE FROM OTHER SOURCES IT APPEARS TO ME THAT THE COLLAPSE OF THE UGANDAN ECONOMY IS FAST MOVING TO THE POINT WHEN INCENTIVE WILL BE VIRTUALLY ABSENT FROM ECONOMIC LIFE IN THE COUNTRY. ALREADY THERE IS WIDESPREAD UNWILLINGNESS TO WORK FOR MONEY WHICH ONE CANNOT USE. THE EROSION OF INCENTIVE CAN ONLY

BE ATTRIBUTED TO A SENSE OF TOTAL FRUSTRATION AND
PURPOSELESSNESS AS A RESULT OF THE LOSS OF ALL HOPE THAT
THE DETERIORATION IN THE COUNTRY WILL BE REVERSED.
CERTAINLY IT IS ONLY THIS SENSE OF HOPLESSNESS THAT
ADEQUATELY EXPLAINS WHAT SEEMS TO BE A FAINT MOVE TOWARDS
PASSIVE RESISTANCE AMONG THE UGANDAN POPULATION. IF
THIS MOVEMENT MATERIALIZES IT COULD BE THE MOST SERIOUS
THREAT YET TO GENERAL AMIN'S REGIME.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NAIROB13000
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780355-0155
Format: TEL
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978089/aaaaagvb.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a5390467-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1811345
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONTINUED DETERIORATION IN UGANDA SITUATION
TAGS: ECON, PINT, UG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a5390467-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014